the upland areas of West Godavari District in Andhra Pradesh;

(d) whether any names are under consideration from that area for nomination; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (e) Reconstitution of the Tobacco Board is under active consideration of the Government. Under clause (e) of sub-Section 4 of Section 4 of the Tobacco Board Act, 1975, not more than ten members are to be appointed on the Board from amongst the tobacco growers, dealers, exporters, manufacturers and marketing/agricultural experts, of which the grower members shall not exceed six. Government have initiated consultations to notify members of the Tobacco Board including grower members whose terms have expired.

Recommendation of Tobacco Board

1775. SHRI S. AUSTIN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether any recommendations of Tobacco Board have been accepted by Commerce Ministry in 1994; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) Government have approved Budget estimates for 1994-95 on the recommendations of the Tobacco Board. Schemes prepared by the Board which are being implemented in 1994 include the operation of the auction system in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, schemes for better quality and yield of VFC tobacco, improving curing and storage facilities, improved grading, control and monitoring of pesticide residues, raising of nurseries, and development of new areas for FCV tobacco. Government have also approved of the Tobacco Board's proposal to construct an auction platform at Kaligiri in Andhra Pradesh.

Encouragement to Cigar Industry

1776. SHRI V. RAJAN CHELLAPPA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Tobacco Board has made any effort to encourage the traditional cigar making industry in Tamil Nadu;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether it is a fact that Tabacco Board has not actively assisted tobacco growers involved in this sector?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) Some steps taken by Tobacco Board to help the traditional cigar making industry in Tamil Nadu include :—

1. Arranging publicity for Indian cigar tobacco by display of samples at international exhibitions;
2. Propagating Indian cigar tobacco through mailing of colour brochures to importers in various countries;
3. Despatch of cigar tobacco samples to interested importers;
4. Promotion of cigar exports to Malaysia and Indonesia during the visit of trade delegations to these countries;
5. Helping to conduct a study by Scientists of Central Tobacco Research Institute aimed at improving quality of Indian cigars and cigar tobacco.

(c) Tobacco Board is inter-alia charged with the responsibility of promoting production of Virginia Tobacco Traditional cigar making tobacco would not, therefore, fall in its purview.

Tobacco Based Cigar Industry

1777. SHRI V. RAJAN CHELLAPPA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Commerce Ministry has taken note of the tobacco-based cigar industry and its export potential in Tamil Nadu;

(b) if so, the details of steps taken to encourage this sector;

(c) whether it is a fact that Commerce Ministry has agreed to restrict the growth of cigar industry; and

(d) if so, the details of legislation being introduced with the concurrence of Commerce Ministry to restrict the growth of cigar industry and exports of cigars?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) Some steps taken to encourage the cottage sector based cigar industry in Tamil Nadu include :

(i) Abolition of excise duty on cigars;

(ii) Import of quality cigar wrappers/filler tobacco for use in export production of cigars permitted under the duty exemption scheme;

(iii) Arranging publicity in international trade exhibitions besides promotion during the foreign visits of trade delegations.